

Division of Drinking Water

Strategic Directions

GOALS:

1. Respond to and handle public health emergencies/ threats, relative to unsafe drinking water from any size public water supply:

Highest priority activities:

- Maintain a 24-hour on-call emergency line and respond to all calls within 30 minutes
- Follow up on all emergencies such as acute coliform violations, acute risk surface water treatment technique violations, acute chemical violations, backflow incidents, security incidents, water outages, etc. in a timely and consistent manner. Follow-up actions are clearly documented.
- Provide good information and guidance to water systems on emergency preparedness and planning. This includes issues related to natural disasters such as drought, floods, and earthquakes, as well as intentional acts such as security related problems.
- Provide accurate risk communication to the public, in coordination with other involved parties.
- Log and respond to complaints on Group A systems consistent with priorities outlined in this document, with the response being clearly documented.

Medium priority activities:

- None identified

Lower priority activities:

- Ensure that all Group A systems have completed the emergency response portion of their water system/small water system management plan.
- Investigate potential contamination sites in coordination with Department of Ecology; information is provided to appropriate federal, state, and local entities.

2. Make important information accurate and easily accessible about drinking water topics, data, and the DW-related work DOH conducts:

Highest priority activities:

- Maintain effective support for on-going divisional data needs during migration from DWAIN to SENTRY.

- Complete DWAIN migration to SENTRY and assure on-going maintenance of the new system.
- Maintain DDW intranet and Internet Web sites.
- Deploy and maintain water quality and geographic data in Web-accessible forms.
- Answer public disclosure and other informational requests in a timely manner, focused on readily available, existing information.

Medium priority activities:

- Analyze and refine DDW data to evaluate priorities and effectively communicate with stakeholders and the general public on drinking water issues.
- Enhance and promote DDW intranet and Internet Web sites.

Lower priority activities:

- Participate in interagency/private partnership WQ/DW educational forums and training opportunities that are not part of our key division priorities.

3. Have a basic understanding of how water is being provided by all Group A public water systems in this state:

Highest priority activities:

- Conduct sanitary surveys on all Group A water systems and develop a baseline on water system status, deficiencies, and needs.
- Collect and maintain accurate information pertaining to Group A systems in the DDW data system via the WFI process.
- Review and approve project reports and construction documents in a timely manner for Water Quality and Source-related projects.
- Deal with transfer of ownership issues in a timely and accurate manner.

Medium priority activities:

- Review and approve distribution-related (pumps, pipes, and tanks) project reports and construction documents in a timely manner (establishing approved number of connections).
- Issue operating permits in a timely manner, accurately portraying the compliance status of the system, and reflecting DDW's priorities.

Lower priority activities:

- Address adequacy requests in a timely manner according to adopted policy

4. Know the basic quality of water being delivered by systems, particularly in regards to microbial and acute chemical parameter:

Highest priority activities:

- In coordination with the Department of Ecology, implement and maintain a credible laboratory certification program to assure quality of the data reported.
- Receive and enter laboratory data into a reliable data management system in a timely manner.
- Implement fully, and track the coliform program plan.

- Make GWI determinations in accordance with the GWI implementation plan, and conduct follow-up activities as appropriate.
- Conduct and track monitoring of acute chemical contaminants (e.g., nitrate) with follow-up action taken as appropriate.
- Review and track surface water-related operations reports with follow-up action taken as appropriate.

Medium priority activities:

- Track chemicals with chronic health concerns (e.g., lead, SOC/VOC, DBPs, arsenic) and take follow-up action as appropriate, including on-going maintenance of the monitoring waiver program.
- Review and track operations reports, take follow-up action as appropriate.

Lower priority activities:

- Track copper monitoring results, take follow-up action in accordance with the Lead/Copper Implementation Plan.
- Monitor for and track information about other, non-acute inorganic compounds.

5. Make it clear to purveyors what their responsibilities are, and position water systems as best we can to successfully meet their responsibilities:

Highest priority activities:

- Provide effective training and outreach to public water systems, their consultants and governmental entities, targeting key division priorities and informing water purveyors of their basic responsibilities for owning and operating a public water system.
- Implement program activities for operator certification to promote the operation of public water systems by trained and qualified operators.
- Promote development of cross-connection control programs, with emphasis on addressing high hazard cross-connection risks.
- Produce and distribute an annual, system-specific Water Quality Monitoring Report, informing systems of their monitoring requirements for the coming year.
- Implement the State Revolving Fund program and other sources of potential revenue to assist water systems to be in compliance with regulatory requirements.

Medium priority activities:

- Assist targeted systems, identified under the Small Community Initiative, in their efforts to comply with regulatory requirements.
- Assist unapproved existing systems in obtaining water system approval when requested by purveyors.

Lower priority activities:

- Promote Consumer Confidence Report requirements (and follow-up on targeted systems) so water systems inform their customers about their regulatory compliance status.
- Provide technical assistance to local governments in their efforts to deal with Group B water system issues.
- Maintain the Satellite Management Program.

6. Take appropriate compliance actions against priority violations, and clear cases of fraudulent operation/ reporting:

Highest priority activities:

- Take appropriate compliance actions on those systems identified as high priority for microbial or acute chemical risks in accordance with the division's adopted compliance strategy/matrix.
- Take appropriate compliance actions on those systems not in compliance with Operator Certification requirements.
- Take appropriate compliance actions on those systems identified as high priority based on chronic water outages or losses of pressure.
- Address all unfiltered surface water sources (in accordance with the Surface Water Implementation Plan) and Treatment Technique Violations for high-risk surface water; ensure that action is being taken to have those sources/plants meet regulatory requirements.
- Notify the system owner, in a timely and clearly documented manner, when water quality and/or reliability of operation issues are found.
- Take enforcement action against any water system conducting fraudulent operating/reporting activities.

Medium priority activities:

- Take appropriate compliance action on those systems identified as high priority based on other criteria on our targeting lists.

Lower priority activities:

- Pursue appropriate compliance action on other divisional priorities as resources allow.

7. Assist water systems in future system planning and development:

Highest priority activities:

- Review and follow up on critical issues (public health & safety and system-specific significant issues) in water system plans for utilities identified as high priority for planning.
- Promote and encourage water-use efficiency by water utilities, with particular emphasis on medium-sized systems (those with 100 – 5,000 connections), and promote and manage a reclaimed water program.
- Encourage development and review of Small Water System Management Programs required for SRF funding, and problem systems.
- Promote and encourage use of WSPs and SWSMPs by purveyors as a tool for maintaining compliance with state and federal DW regulations.
- Streamline review of non-key utilities' WSPs with a critical issue (public health & safety and system-specific issues).

Medium priority activities:

- Promote and assist source-water protection efforts; focus on highly susceptible sources.

- Encourage development of Small Water System Management programs for non-expanding systems.

Lower priority activities:

- Provide more comprehensive reviews of water system plans that are submitted.

8. Participate in long-range strategies relative to future delivery of water in the state:

Highest priority activities:

- Support legislative/executive priorities; work with local entities to collect baseline information on priority Group B systems.
- Evaluate and address water resource and infrastructure related issues that potentially impact long-term water system adequacy and reliability.
- Promote and encourage regionalized consolidation of small water systems.
- Assist with implementing and maintaining critical elements of CWSP planning program.
- Assist local governments in developing watershed management plans, when funding is provided for these efforts.

Medium priority activities:

- Assist in focused, regional efforts for utility planning and development.

Lower priority activities:

- None identified.

(Note: These strategic directions reflect activities that are externally delivered by the Division of Drinking Water, and do not address or include other priority business processes internal to the division, such as financial management, personnel management, staff development, etc.. Those internally focused issues remain on a priority track of their own.)

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